

600 EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

600 OVERVIEW

Every good meeting has certain fundamental qualities: the participants understand the business at hand, the agenda is organized to achieve the participants' purpose, the meeting follows the agenda, visual presentations are made when doing so helps to clarify the information or issue under discussion, and the meeting begins and ends on time. Fair Board (Board) meetings should last as long as required to complete the fair's business and no longer. Disciplined management of meeting start and end times provides an incentive to members to attend and participate in Board meetings.

601 MEETING MINUTES

After the closing of each meeting, the Secretary transcribes the minutes of the meeting for presentation and acceptance vote at the next board meeting. This presentation of the previous month's minutes allows the Board an opportunity to clarify and revised any misinterpretations of the prior meeting. Within 10 (ten) working days following the meeting in which the minutes were accepted, the Secretary forwards a finalized copy of the minutes to F&E.

602 THE AGENDA

An agenda is a blueprint and the single absolute requirement for a successful meeting. Without an agenda, any meeting is in constant danger of veering off course, failing to achieve its goals, and turning into a monumental waste of time. Shorter agendas encourage in-depth discussion of each agenda item. To comply with public meeting laws, special restrictions apply to preparation and use of agendas at fair board meetings.¹

¹Fair Board directors are responsible for knowing and obeying open meeting laws. If your fair is a DAA, the fair should have a copy of a report prepared by the Attorney General's Office: *Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act* (1989), with amendments; this report covers open meeting requirements applicable to state agencies. If your fair is not a DAA, the fair should have a copy of *The Brown Act* (1994), also prepared by the Attorney General's Office; this report covers open meeting requirements applicable to local agencies. Refer to the Appendix, Section 500 for a copy of these documents. Your CEO can obtain additional copies by calling the Publications Office in the Department of Justice in Sacramento at 916.324.5765 or by Internet at www.caag.state.ca.us

602.1 *Consent Agenda*

A consent agenda is a list of routine, non-controversial decisions or actions requiring board action or approval, respectively. Many boards and legislative bodies use a consent agenda to signal to their members which items are routine transactions, as opposed to policy decisions, and therefore do not warrant intense scrutiny or lengthy discussion. The board chair and CEO, perhaps in consultation with the executive committee (if one exists), are responsible for deciding which items belong on the consent agenda and then ranking the remaining items in priority order. The agenda package sent out to directors in advance of each meeting should include a brief explanation of each item on the consent agenda. When the board convenes, any director may request that an item be removed from the consent agenda, and opened for general discussion and a separate vote.

603 *ROLE OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT*

The board president is responsible for controlling the meeting without dominating it, encouraging discussion to bring out ideas, and making sure all items on the agenda are covered within the allocated time. In addition, it is the responsibility of the board chair to give members of the public who may be in attendance and wish to speak to the board an opportunity to address any issue on the agenda.

603.1 *Opening a Board Meeting*

The board president can set the right tone for a meeting by opening with an enumeration of the items on the agenda and a brief description of the decisions the board needs to make, and ask board members who are familiar with particular agenda items to share background information.

603.2 *Closing a Board Meeting*

One of the board president's most important roles is to recognize the right time to bring a meeting to a close. Effective meetings end when all pertinent discussion has been completed. He or she should bring the meeting to a definite conclusion by providing a closing statement that summarizes what has taken place, the decisions that were made, and actions that should follow the meeting. If work assignments were made to individuals, the board chair should reiterate these at the close of the meeting. The meeting is not over until the chair has declared that the meeting is adjourned.

604 *ROLE OF THE BOARD MEMBER*

While the board chair is clearly the leader at a board meeting, every director is responsible for being prepared to discuss the issues on the agenda and for participating in that discussion. Board members share responsibility for welcoming members of the public at board meetings and supporting their right and opportunity to address the board.